

Ellis (G. E.)

ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT

THE CONSECRATION

OF THE

WOODLAWN CEMETERY

IN CHELSEA AND MALDEN.

ON WEDNESDAY, JULY 2, 1851.

BY GEORGE E. ELLIS.



BOSTON:

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PRINTED BY JOHN WILSON & SON,

22, SCHOOL STREET.

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## A D D R E S S .

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WE have come together from our living homes to set apart these fresh acres of the earth as a resting-place for the dead. The most cheerful influences of nature are around us and over us. Our theme is not a cheerless one, save to the unthinking and the undevout, who omit from their view of life its divine element, and see in its close only the termination both of happiness and of hope. Our theme has lessons as bright and soothing as are these present aspects of nature: the heart is sensitive to some precious emotions which no other theme can stir. The cool water-course flows beside us; the trees wear their summer garb; the sun is performing his flaming ministry of life; the birds enjoy their brief day; the glorious expanse above us spreads as wide as does our largest hope. We have been educated by the spirit and the lessons of a faith which has rolled away the stone

from the sepulchre, and brought immortality to light.

Appropriate rites, the solemn hymn, the uplifted prayer, the thoughts and words which the occasion and place call forth, the calm and seemly spectacle which we now make and look upon, are to leave a spell upon these scenes. We trust that these acres will find no other use than as the last bed for mortal clay, while the present bounds of civilization remain. Though very near to us are now incessantly in motion the thousand sounds of the busiest scenes which the surface of the whole earth can present, their din and turmoil are silenced here. The dead and the living will not be too far apart for such communication between them as necessity and sympathy will require. But these green slopes which skirt the horizon are the proper boundaries of this spot. There are still some broad acres amid these busy regions which have witnessed only the toils of healthful husbandry. Their annual crops have nourished the living. Birds and squirrels have still a home here, and we give them leave to remain.

We have come to consecrate this broad enclosure, its green turf, its forest-thickets, its water-courses and fountains, its quiet seclusion, and every shrub and flower which shall grow here. And what is the consecration of this spot? Now, while the sod has as

yet been pierced for but a single grave,\* we consecrate it by devoting it to its destined purpose; for that is to our minds a sacred purpose. We consecrate it by passing over its fenced bounds in the hushed and meditative mood which our thoughts here wear. We consecrate it by connecting with it now those lessons, tender, sad, and yet elevating, which, we trust, will be deepened year after year in unnumbered breasts, — each lingering over its own most cherished parcel of earth, the shrine of its own remembrances and loves. Henceforward it will receive a fuller consecration from the dust which it shall gather, and from the mourners who shall follow it hither. When, from those clustering homes which sweep the horizon around us, shall have been brought here, one by one, the honored, the useful, the cherished, the little babe or its mother, the father, lover, bride or friend, the silent forms of the youthful or the aged; and when from those homes these buried treasures, not forgotten, though mysteriously veiled, shall draw hitherwards the meditative steps of survivors, — then shall these scenes be truly consecrated. All that is deep and constant in human affection shall prove its power here. That little secret stream which fills the tear-channel of the human eye, and which is dried up only when they

\* The first interment was made in these grounds on the afternoon of the day preceding that of their consecration.



that weep are themselves bewept, shall here pour forth its precious drops. Each sod shall by and by receive its nutriment from those tears. The harvests of every autumn shall increase their gatherings here. And when the spring unlocks the fetters of winter, faith shall here brighten and console the hearts of the submissive and the trustful. The prayers that shall here be breathed into the air will be as many and as fervent as have been caught by the walls of the oldest temple. And this will be consecration.

The most ancient records of man's life on the earth present us with three chief tokens to mark the possession of a portion of its surface as an abiding-place of human families: the well of water, the altar of worship, the tomb or cave for the dead. With what an impressive power, — the force and beauty of simple truth, — does that combination of the well, the altar, and the tomb affect us! They lead us back upon the tide of ages, and bring us to the first habitable spot of the earth. The altar rising above the soil, the well and the grave beneath it, express to us the three great natural wants of man. Life's chief necessity, its divine law, its inevitable issue, are thus presented to the eye and to the mind. Amid our ten thousand wants, behold the three which crown them all, and one of those three the body's lonely and everlasting couch! The well-spring gathering its crystal drops from the



secret depths of the earth, and receiving them back again when man had used them and a heavenly distillation had renewed their purity, was a token that near to it grass would grow, and man and beast find sustenance. The rude altar-stone, which no tool had touched, was raised upon some overlooking summit: kneeling around it, the patriarchal family called upon themselves the name of God, and thus recognized that everlasting, that universal truth, the basis of all clear thought, knowledge and science, as well as of all religion, — that this earth, and all its elements and tribes, depend upon the loftier influences of the sky, and owe allegiance to the unseen Centre and Source of power, when comes forth the energy that controls and blesses. When the life that had been nourished by food and water, and kept mindful of a Divine oversight by the altar, came to its appointed close, there lay a cold and changing body, a forsaken tenement; and the mourner said, "Let me bury my dead out of my sight." Then the dust returned to the earth as it was.

There is a charm in those pastoral images which come up before our minds, as we read of the ancient wells of Canaan. The fervor and glow of true worship, as an exercise apart from all but the heart's own attitude, kindles through our spirits, as we read of the altars upon Horeb, Bethel, Carmel, Zion, and Gerizim, and upon every other summit over which the pilgrim-

ages of the patriarchs led them. But what can surpass in tender pathos that scene and those words in which the aged Jacob, dying in Egypt, turns away in loathing from its mummy tombs, as he remembers the resting-place of his family, and gives to his sons a commandment concerning his bones: "I AM TO BE GATHERED UNTO MY PEOPLE: BURY ME WITH MY FATHERS IN THE CAVE THAT IS IN THE FIELD OF MACHPELAH, IN THE LAND OF CANAAN, WHICH ABRAHAM BOUGHT WITH THE FIELD OF EPHRON THE HITTITE, FOR A POSSESSION OF A BURYING-PLACE. THERE THEY BURIED ABRAHAM, AND SARAH HIS WIFE; THERE THEY BURIED ISAAC, AND REBEKAH HIS WIFE; AND THERE I BURIED LEAH." The tent for the living was movable; but the well, the altar, and the tomb were permanent. It was through those three tokens of an inalienable possession, as the vouchers of a title, sure and sufficient as our modern deeds, that the patriarchal family, returning from an accidental though protracted sojourn in Egypt, claimed their inheritance in Canaan.

Wells, altars, and graves, the earliest, the universal tokens of man's presence on the earth, the most essential objects of his interest, are also the most enduring of his works. They multiply as do the tribes and numbers of our race. They retain the same relation to each other and to human life, and the same proportion as of old; for men everywhere need them

all alike. Where we find things so inseparably related and connected, there is ever a sort of sacred beauty in their union. This relation is to be recognized here. The water already flows in a pure stream ; the altar of prayer is to stand on yonder rising ground ; and all around us are to be graves.

To these hidden repositories of the earth have been committed, age after age, unnumbered multitudes. How much of the earth itself is already a cemetery ! How large a portion of its material elements has been wrought into human bodies ! The idea of a transmigration, of a perpetual circuit of spirits, from one to another form, higher or lower in the scale of organized life, if but a mere fancy as regards the intelligent essence of man, is plain fact as regards the substance of human bodies. I have spoken of these as fresh acres of the earth, as yet unfamiliar with the processes and trophies of man's decay. But how know we that ? Who can tell what remains of races, before our brief historic age here, may mingle with this soil ? It may be as the poet writes, that —

“ This green mould, the mother of bright flowers,  
Was bone and sinew once, now decomposed ;  
Perhaps has lived, breathed, walked as proud as we,  
And animate with all the faculties  
And finer senses of the human soul !  
And now what are they ? To their elements  
Each has returned, dust crumbled back to dust,  
The spirit gone to God ! ”



How healthful is the chemistry of nature's laboratory, which can thus dissolve with a gentle but irresistible force all organized forms! How beautiful are those patient processes of the elements, as they work on kindred materials their renewing toils! God open the eyes of our understandings, and quicken the sensibilities of our hearts, that we may enter into this rich wisdom, and be led up to him, its Fount, its Teacher!

The whole large compass of human thoughts and feelings has exhibited itself in the modes of disposing of the dead. Passion, affection, fancy, and superstition have had in this their freest range, and the philosophy of humanity might be illustrated by the views and usages connected with the departed of our race. Dread horrors have deepened the gloom which rests over the last rites of mortality. Barbarous ceremonies and cruel sacrifices, howlings, incantations, and the appalling frenzies of real or feigned despair, have settled over the funeral forms of the darker heathenism. The word *funeral*—derived as it is from the word which signifies a *torch*—still perpetuates a memorial of the ancient custom of midnight burials. Many of our sad images of death come from those barbaric fashions which we have put aside. And then again, by that inconstant action of the human mind, so marked in all the devices and conceptions of bewil-

dered man, these horrors vanish; these barbarous rites, these appalling solemnities, pass like dark clouds lifted up from some sunnier portions of the earth, some tribes or peoples of a gentler and finer fancy. Some of the most delicate and beautiful conceptions of poetry, some of the fairest fashionings of a dreaming brain, images and visions which wear the hue of remotest distance under the haze of light and shade, cover with the mysterious charm of classic draperies the naked form of death. Yet even of these, while they contain enough of higher sentiment to prove their affinity with the workings of man's nobler part, we must admit that they are mingled with mean imaginations and puerile fancies, to prove that the spirit was venturously groping amid things all unknown, and unilluminated by the faith which turns to a heavenly country. Comparing the ancient heathen devices with the simple proprieties of Christian burial, we are reminded that these funeral rites have been burdened with all the gloom of superstition, and have been cheered by all the radiance of the spirit's brightest hope.

The various methods which have been employed through all time for the disposal of mortal remains, range themselves under one or another of three leading purposes in the minds of survivors. The first designed to resist or delay the dissolution of the body,

and had recourse to embalmment. The second sought to hasten that dissolution, and, to that end, heaped the funeral pyre and applied the torch. The third method committed the body to the earth, and left it to the appointed processes and dealings of nature.

The poor devices of Egyptian art to avert the waste and dispersion of the elements of a human body required a violent dealing with it which was inconsistent with the purpose itself, and have been defeated and sadly mocked in the result. The organs of life and breath and thought, the heart, the lungs and brain, indeed all but the mere muscles and bones of the dead body, were withdrawn, that their places might be supplied by gums and spices. So that, after all the toil and pain, the linen bandages and the sealed coffin preserved only a part of the wreck of a human form. Preserved it! yes; but how long, and for what a fate at last! For a fate far less meet and seemly than the gentle and sure dealing of the kindly earth, which would hide the shame, and manifest only the glory, of man. Some of those mummied relics have been torn from their ancient vaults to be made gazing-stocks in the museums of modern cities: these are supposed to be chosen specimens of the royal, the priestly, the mighty, and the honored, because of the splendor of their encasement. But for the millions of the common dead which heap the catacombs of Memphis and



of Thebes, of Luxor and of Karnak, the necessities of the living have found a use. The wretched Arab wanderer will prepare his evening meal this night by a fire kindled from these pitchy relics of the elder race of Mizraim.

Two reasons have been imagined for this Egyptian custom of embalmment: one, that it was designed to prevent the distempers or plagues which would have attended the corruption of the dead in the crowded regions of a hot clime; the other, a fond belief that the spirit would yet return to its forsaken body, and that, so long as its parts could be kept together, there would be hope of its re-awakening to life. The latter reason is most conformed to what we know of the religious opinions of that race and age, and of their influence upon the customs of those who held them. But who that sees, as we see, the disappointment of that doting purpose,—the preservation of the body,—could have the heart to entertain it now? Or who would risk his hope of future being on so slender a chance for its fulfilment?

The rich melodies of the old Greek and Roman poetry describe to us the funeral flames which dissolved into ashes the old heroes of those classic isles and lands. Achilles consumed to ashes the remains of his friend Patroclus, which were deposited in a golden urn beneath a mound, till the ashes of Achilles

himself were mingled with them, and the friends met again in the shades. Hector was burnt before the walls of Troy. Great generals, monarchs, and renowned men, were honored with all the spectacles and ceremonies which could exalt these obsequies of flame. Luxury and ostentation in ancient Rome magnified the funeral rites, by burning the dead with polished or fragrant wood, and pouring upon the fire libations of wine. The ashes, gathered in an urn, were deposited in the sepulchre beside the vase that held the tears. Chaldea exposed the flesh of the dead to chance or to beasts, and was anxious only to preserve their bones. The Scythians hung their dead in the air. We read of tribes who have used the sea for a burial-place, while others have shrunk from its awful caverns.

The just conclusion, from all the various opinions and customs of different people through the whole recorded history of our race, has now settled upon interment as the natural disposal of the dead. No embalment will preserve the body; and, if it would, wherefore should it be preserved? Corruption cannot inherit incorruption. There are no objections to the funeral pyre, save that it is unnecessary, as doing at a price what nature will do freely, and that it wears the show of a harsh process with mortal clay, whose shapings and features have been dear. Scripture doth not sentence us to ashes, but to dust, in our burial:

“Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return.” So have Jews and Christians, who revere that Scripture, been content to allow the dust to return to the earth as it was. Turning with loathing from all barbarous rites, from all artifices and dreary deceptions of the sight, we have learned to adorn with simplicity our Christian burials. The separated and consecrated spaces are called by Germans the “fields of hope;” by the Dutch, “God’s acres;” but best of all by us, our burial-places.

The necessities of the times, the changed circumstances in the modes of civilized life, have demanded these cemeteries. Village churchyards and city burial-grounds no longer suffice. But let us not forget or be insensible to the uses—the good uses—that are in them. Our own English ancestors on this soil were but little influenced by considerations of taste in the selection of fields for the interment of their dead. Their religious views, and their relative estimate of all such matters, would not dispose them to give much heed to the adorning of the body’s resting-place. Convenience was the chief consideration with them on this point. It was not their general custom to connect the graveyard with the meeting-house. On marking out the bounds of a new precinct in the wilderness, and allotting woodland, upland, and meadow to the planters, they generally selected some dreary spot,



whose sandy soil would make the labors of the spade easy for the burial of the dead. Yet those rough beds of earth have in their keeping much precious dust.

But those churchyards, as they are so truly called in the smaller villages and hamlets of old England, how beautiful they are! In such retired spots as those in which the population does not increase, and the proportion between the consecrated ground and the numbers of the villagers is such as to allow to the few that die each year their own graves, there is a charm about the churchyards which our cemeteries will never have. If the dust of the sleepers is there disturbed, it is only that that of rude forefathers may mingle with that of their descendants; and this is but a kindly violence. Time and nature, year by year, sweeten and smooth enough of the soil to give a peaceful bed to the scanty number who "fall on sleep" with each round of the seasons. It is all kindred dust, and the children are gathered to the fathers. The old church rises with quaint and massy repose, seated firmly amid the graves which tell so touchingly of human instability. Within, the aged walls and the oaken benches have gathered impressive associations. Occasionally, the lofty monument of the lord or lady of the manor, or the knightly effigies, will perpetuate just enough of worldly distinctions to show

that they are vanity. In the yard around the church, full, but not crowded, are the tablets, headstones, and memorials of the humbler dead. Who that has ever lingered about some of those ancient hamlet churchyards, at the close of the Sunday service, has not felt the sweetness and pathos of their power? The villagers are spelling out the names of their remote ancestry, or recalling the memories of the recent dead, whose animosities are hushed, whose love only revives. In the lone corner by the wall, rest the chance wayfarers, the strangers who have died in the hamlet, with a mysterious or a sad tale connected with their end, but with no kith or kin to follow them to their unhonored graves. Yet the traditions of the hamlet transmit their story; and it is told and heard by some, each pleasant Sunday of the year. The ancient yew-trees cut in fantastic forms, and the ivied tower, afford a shelter to the rooks, who succeed to as many generations of their own tribe, on the same spot, as do their living human companions. Rich in all that can adorn a landscape, or mingle wise mementos with the soil of the earth, are those quiet rural churchyards. Soothing and holy are their influences to the heart that is touched by the common sympathies of humanity. We owe to one such lovely spot as choice a gem of poetry as is to be found in the English or in any other language, — Gray's *Elegy in a Country Churchyard*.

Nor is it to be regretted, that every long-inhabited city contains some ancient and crowded spot, whose whole contents are human dust, decaying tombs, sinking stones, and a wild growth of vegetation. These, too, have their use. If no longer disturbed in their reluctance to afford room for more in their thick-set graves, they are wise monitions, solemn sights, for a city. They tell of a fashion which does not change; the fashion which bids us all to put off these bodies. They answer a better purpose, and with a more gracious method, than did the grim human skull which was set upon an Egyptian banqueting-table. The deep, rich foliage which they will nourish may shade the failing memorials of the dead, and cover with a garment of beauty the beds of their repose. The healthful air will draw through them. The timid bird, whose instinct has been deceived in them as if they were rural spaces, may find in them a place for its nest. The falling leaves of autumn will impress their instruction. Winter will spread over them its white robe of unsullied snow. Spring will there yearly teach the sublime lesson that life is born out of death. Let our city burial-grounds remain, unused indeed, but inviolate; tastefully arrayed, and kept in seemly order. They seem sometimes to be the only memorials of mortality which some who live in cities cannot shut out from their view. But when the silent,



the sleeping population of a city outnumbers its living crowds, it is time to part the region around between them, and to prepare cemeteries like this. A burial-ground still in use in a large city is an offence and a harm; for then it will rather repel than solemnize the living, while it scarce secures repose to the dead.

The ideal of an appropriate resting-place for the dead is not difficult to define to the mind, nor to realize by the wise use of the means which we have at our service. A pure taste, a healthful sentiment, an instructed mind, a skilful hand, may plan and execute. Such an ideal will exclude and admit certain features, emblems, decorations, and details, according to rules which carry with them their own warrant, or are readily approved when weighed and considered.

The first aim should be to exclude all garish tokens of display and vanity, all theatrical embellishment, all excesses of mere sentiment, all coarse and repulsive emblems of the mere materialism of death. Though we say that the grave equalizes all mortal distinctions, we do not say so truly. Some signs of the distinctions and rivalries of life will find expression here: it cannot be otherwise where wealth and poverty shall have their graves. Such distinctions, so far as they arise from eminent excellencies of character, or honorable fidelity in discharging the higher trusts of exist-

ence, ought to be recognized here ; for they are part of the wisdom of the grave. Good taste, yes, something more simple even than that, will forbid the obtrusion here of all eccentricities, all that is barbarous in the shapings of the monumental structure, or boastful or ill-toned in the inscription which it may bear. Death needs no artificial skill, no ingenuity, no conceit, no parade, to invest it with effect. All such exhibitions will but detract from its solemnity.

And, even as to epitaphs, there are some suggestions which may be spoken in a still tenantless cemetery, better than where in single instances good taste may have been violated. Flattering titles, superlative praise, and even some expressions of grief or hope, do not become the monuments of the dead. In the sacred privacy of a saddened home, a father or a mother may be spoken of as "the very best of parents." Brother, sister, or friend may there be extolled as excelling all others, known to the fond household circle, in purity, goodness, or fidelity. But, if the superlatives and encomiums which express these domestic partialities are inscribed upon stone and obtruded upon strangers, they may not always awaken the right emotion. So also, when those who have not lived or died in the esteem and good report of their associates are committed to the earth, near affection may have treasured some remembrances of kindness,

some good intent, some struggling effort, even in them ; and the softened hearts of the mourning may prompt an epitaph — as often an obituary — which will not harmonize with general repute nor with the grounds of Christian hope. Modest silence is better than the ventures of charity, or the prominent suggestion of the large compass of the Divine mercy. The great hope of affection may be as strong if held within the heart, as if it were chiselled out in marble. The philosopher Plato restricted the longest epitaph to four verses, and suggested that the poorest soil was most meet for human burials. We may approve his former counsel rather than the latter. The epitaph of the emperor Adrian's horse is preserved ; but his own has perished, — not, we may surmise, because of its modesty or its justice.

The rules of exclusion, which good taste and the harmonies of propriety and consistency will enforce in such a cemetery, will not trespass upon the large liberty which individual preferences may exercise for variety. Variety will be desirable here as elsewhere. The colors of the stones from which monuments are hewn are various : so may be their shapes, and the emblems which they bear. Flowers and trees are diversely fashioned, robed, and dyed : so may be their groupings and effects. The slender or the solid structure, the broken shaft, the consecrated cross, the

simple headstone, the single memorial of a whole household with the record-page of the family Bible transcribed upon it, the urn, the vase, the withering flower, the chrysalis, the inverted torch, the winged globe, the serpent, coiled into a circle, — the ancient emblem of unending time, — these do not exhaust variety, though they express so much. It is, however, to be remembered here, that the effort after singularity or novelty, whether shown in dress or manners or literature, or scientific or philosophical or religious speculations, most frequently fails, and in matters of taste produces the most tasteless results.

While much will depend upon the exclusion from these consecrated acres of all that is unbecoming and inappropriate, there is here a wide scope for the heightening of natural beauties, and for the introduction of the decorations of a chaste art. True, we do not have here some of the more striking features of bold and grand scenery ; with its sheer precipices, its overhanging mountain-brows and hill-tops, its deep, dark ravines, its abrupt declivities and ascents. But neither, on the other hand, is this a flat level, a tame, unvaried field, barren and drear. It is admirably suited for its destined purpose. This broad enclosure scarcely in any portion of it presents a level surface. It is varied with gentle undulations, and with that rolling line of beauty which attends the ascending



smoke and the moving cloud. It bears thousands of forest-trees in full growth, amid whose roots the secret springs of water play, and flow to feed ponds and jets and fountains. Distant hills surround it, and from yonder tower may be seen the waters of the harbor and the bay. There go the ships, bearing upon the inconstant element, and under a heavenly pilotage, the freighted burdens of precious wealth from shore to shore ; making them so fitting emblems of the voyage of existence, whose port of departure is life, whose course is over the ocean of time, whose harbor is eternity.

When taste and skill and affection shall have displayed their efforts here ; when these fresh road-ways shall have been worn by travel, and the little by-paths which are to course between the family enclosures shall have been marked out ; when cultivation shall have improved the natural, and judiciously introduced the artificial, beauties of shrub and flower, of the quarry and the mine, then will the judgment stand well approved which pronounced these acres adapted to this use. More than a hundred acres are here devoted to the burial of the dead. For what a multitude will they afford repose ! How can we exaggerate the importance or the lessons of a spot of earth which is to gather such a congregation of the living and the unborn !

There is range enough in what is natural and simple to secure variety in the arrangement and adornment of this spot, to effect all that is desirable in impressions through the senses, and to excite those musing exercises of the heart and the spirit which convert outward objects into inward food. The chief dependence for such effects must be upon nature, its own true and unchanging features, its bolder outlines, its more delicate shapings, its sublime grandeur, its beautiful emblems, its ever-interesting processes to the observant mind. The earth itself, which is the scene of all man's mortal joy and striving in life, gives him a bed of silence for the everlasting repose of his body. The ancient heavens whose glorious canopy was spread above, before man's little round of life began, will still bend over his place of sepulchre; and so far as they are high above the earth, and larger than its compass, will those heavens for ever suggest a home for all departed spirits. God teaches us all by nature, and we are made wise by constant communion, by sympathy and harmony, with it.

All nature should indeed be consecrated to man, and may be consecrated. Nature may stand to man as a vast enduring temple, reared for God; the ever-restless waters daily renew its baptism; the smoke of happy homes, and each kind breathing of every true heart, is its incense; its ten thousand scenes of indus-

try and duty are so many altars ; all faithful lives are accepted offerings ; and these resting-places of the dead are like the holy crypts of the sanctuary beneath its more trodden ways. Here at midnight, during the storms of winter, will be heard the beating of the angry surf upon the lashed beach ; and, if the ear of the living is here to listen, how deep will be the contrast between the hushed repose of those who sleep beneath, and the wild fury of the tempest ! And what is such a contrast, compared with that between the dread loneliness, the stormy passions, of a heart without hope, and the peaceful trust of the spirit which looks upon death as the appointed way for entering on a true life !

And where do the changing seasons have such power to impress us as in an extensive and well-ordered cemetery ? The seasons of the year—how touchingly and instructively will they bear in their various lessons to the heart ! Here will humanity in all its ages, from the one day or hour of infancy, as its all of earthly life, to the aged of a century of years, find the same repose. The aspect of existence to each will have partaken of all the changing sights which mark a revolution of this earth around the sun. To some, existence will have been only spring-time, a bright inconstant promise, a budding joy, a seed sown in a cold furrow and denied a propitious

growth. To some, life will have been a summer glory, all bloom and fragrance, and half-formed fruit, and half-realized hope, but with no maturity, no gathering-in of a perfected harvest. Autumn and winter, too, will apply their similitudes and parables to the ripened sheaves and the seasonable fruits of those who reach or pass the appointed bounds of life. For life and nature illustrate the same high wisdom.

Nor do we deceive ourselves when we yield to the hope, that, by gathering around a place of graves all becoming adornments, we may do very much to refine our own sensibilities, to relieve death of some of its derived horrors, and to quicken the longing aspirations which sustain our faith in an hereafter. All nature hath a death and a resurrection, and every dying seed perpetuates its own life in the fruits of its decay. Human language has not expressed a more profound or cheerful truth than is conveyed in those words of the Saviour: "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but, if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." The cypress-tree should not have been made an ornament and emblem of death; for, though its dark and silent leaves are expressive of melancholy, and the wood is almost incorruptible, the tree bears no fruit.

That is but a coarse and superficial judgment which thinks to impress good lessons by presenting



the repulsive images of mortality, the frights and horrors of death. Those rude devices which were formerly carved upon gravestones—the grinning skull, the scythe of time, the wasted hour-glass—were more apt to provoke to a passionate indulgence in lower pleasures, while life lasted, than to rouse the finer sensibilities, whose faithful exercise will redeem our brief day. We must learn to free death from all these repulsive images. To this end, it is desirable, that, when a human body has once been interred, it be left untouched for ever. Would that there still prevailed some of the old ritual horror of defilement to guard our sepulchres! Would that the dead might have the same undisturbed possession of their resting-places, which the law secures to the living on the soil which they have occupied for a brief term of years! Let us hope that the consecration of large cemeteries like this, with the common interest which they impart to a large number of persons in their care and good ordering, will help, with other influences, to substitute Christian for Pagan views of death.

Thus, then, would we consecrate from this time forth these verdant fields around us. We give them up to the dead, and to such services to the living as it is in the power of the dead still to perform while their bodies shall slumber here. This is no place for parties of pleasure, or for scenes of revelry. Let the

remains of the humblest and the loftiest find here an inviolate repose. Let the untutored utterances of sorrow from the lowly, as well as the more decorous reserve of the refined, be regarded as expressing the same sentiment of the same human heart; and so let the rudest memorial, as well as the stateliest monument, be hallowed. Let the adornments be chaste and becoming. Let the spirit and influences of this cemetery instil soothing and elevating sentiments into the heart of the chance visiter from the living world, while they relieve death of all its needless gloom. Let the sacred calm of retirement which shall settle over these consecrated fields be a type of that peace which the blessed gospel of the Lord Jesus offers to those who "sorrow as not without hope." Let the holy sentence inscribed upon the gateway comfort the mourners who bring their dead hither, and pronounce the great hope of all who shall sleep here, —

"I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE!"

**Order of Exercises**  
 AT THE  
 CONSECRATION OF WOODLAWN CEMETERY,  
 JULY 2, 1851.

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I. CHANT — PSALM XXIII.

II. READING THE SCRIPTURES.

BY REV. J. P. LANGWORTHY, OF CHELSEA.

III. PRAYER.

BY REV. WM. I. BUDDINGTON, OF CHARLESTOWN.

IV. ORIGINAL HYMN.

BY REV. J. H. CLINCH, OF BOSTON.

FATHER! we consecrate to thee  
 Valley and hill and rock and tree:  
 Here may thy soothing spirit rest,  
 Thy peace be felt, thy love confessed.

Here let the blight of Winter's wing,  
 The living breath of opening Spring,  
 Speak to the soul that looks to thee  
 Of death and immortality.

Here may the mourner, 'mid these glades,  
 These peaceful walks, these solemn shades,  
 Behold their charm o'er sorrow thrown,  
 And feel their spirit soothe his own.

Remote from crowds and strifes and woes,  
 In Nature's solemn, deep repose,  
 Let the dead sleep, — the living come  
 To weep in silence o'er their tomb.

Let homes for living men be made  
 In streets where crowding thousands tread;  
 The patriarch's "cave and purchased field"  
 For death more fitting mansions yield.



Through our sad chambers, day by day,  
 Death's dreaded form will force its way ;  
 But let his graves without be spread, —  
 Bind not the living to the dead.

“Place for the dead !” the living cry ;  
 Free air, wide space, around us lie, —  
 Fit home of death, if Thou but deign  
 Here, in thy peace and love, to reign.

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#### V. ADDRESS.

BY REV. GEORGE E. ELLIS, OF CHARLESTOWN.

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#### VI. HYMN.

BY H. W. FULLER, ESQ. OF ROXBURY.

Now smooth we here a sacred bed,  
 And plant our city for the dead ;  
 Not with vain pomp or festive cheer,  
 But, Lord, as dust to dust draw near.

Here shall Affection watch the hour  
 When Spring may drop her earliest flower ;  
 And Love, with gifts and perfumes sweet,  
 Shall deck and hallow this retreat.

Here may bright Hope her chaplets bring,  
 And o'er these glades her radiance fling ;  
 And, when dark night breathes sad and still,  
 Here trim her lamps, — her dews distil.

When Grief, unsolaced, comes with gloom  
 To linger round the garden-tomb,  
 May smiling Faith “the stone remove,”  
 And Joy celestial beam above.

Then, Lord, appear ! the victory give ! —  
 Thou to thyself thine own receive :  
 Grant, as we pass Death's portal through,  
 The heaven of heavens may fill our view !

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#### VII. PRAYER AND BENEDICTION.

BY REV. LEVI TUCKER, OF BOSTON.

## THE WOODLAWN CEMETERY.

THIS Corporation was organized Aug. 31, 1850. Since that time, it has been engaged in the preparation of the grounds, avenues, and structures proper for a rural cemetery of the first class. The spot selected contains about the same number of acres as Mount Auburn, and is admirably adapted to the purpose, — with a fine soil and forest-growth, and with artificial ponds and fountains of much beauty. The Gothic gatehouse and lodge at the entrance, facing south, are remarkable for their dignity and grace. The two receiving-tombs are also fine specimens of work; and a rustic winding-tower of rocks — seventy feet in diameter at the base — has been commenced, and raised about twenty feet, to constitute an observatory of a picturesque and striking character. This is to be covered with ever-green ivy, and with moss and climbing roses, between which visitors may wind their way, ascending to the top.

If lots are early taken, so that they may be graded and sodded at once, trees and shrubs may be planted in the fall, and the whole place be made attractive in the spring. A neglect of a few months, however, may lose the next year's growth and flowers. The grounds are now enclosed with a picketed fence of chestnut-wood, about seven feet high; and every care will be taken to prevent trespasses.

At present, all visitors are permitted to walk or drive in a proper manner in the grounds, without any ticket of admission; it being presumed that all will observe the proprieties of the place.

Lots are conveyed in fee-simple, under proper rules and regulations. They are not subject to taxes or attachment, nor can they be assessed for improvements. They may be transferred, but not divided. The Superintendent or his Assistant will always be found at Woodlawn.

### Trustees.

JAMES ADAMS, Charlestown . . . . . *President.*

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BENJAMIN A. GOULD, Boston.	GEO. W. WARREN, Charlestown.
JACOB SLEEPER, „	DANIEL WHITE, „
THOS. WIGGLESWORTH, jun. „	DANIEL A. WISE, Malden.
ALBERT C. BOWKER, East Boston.	ISAAC STEBBINS, Chelsea.

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H. WELD FULLER, 35, Court-street, Boston . *Treasurer & Secretary.*

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JAMES CRUICKSHANKS, Woodlawn . . . . . *Superintendent.*

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### TERMS FOR LOTS.

Lots, 15 feet by 20 feet (300 square feet), exclusive of borders .	\$40
Select Lots on Main Avenues, exclusive of borders . . . .	50
Half Lots, in the places assigned therefor . . . . .	25

### For Single Graves.

Single Grave in the "Stranger's Rest" . . . . .	10
„ „ „Field of Ephron," for an adult . . . .	7
„ „ „ for a child over 5 and under 12 years .	5
„ „ „ for a child under 5 years of age . . .	4
„ „ „Bed of the Innocents," a garden for young children . . . . .	6

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At present, the best mode of reaching Woodlawn from the city is by crossing the Chelsea Bridge or Ferry; turning off, to the left, at Washington Avenue, near the planing mill. This is the shortest, but most hilly route. By turning off a little sooner, opposite the Suffolk House, Chelsea, and taking the Malden Road, the hills are avoided, without much increase of distance.

Woodlawn may also be reached by crossing the Malden Bridge, and turning off, to the right, at Oakes's Corner.

Distance, by the best line, from Boston, about  $4\frac{1}{2}$  miles; from East Boston,  $2\frac{1}{2}$ ; from Charlestown, 3; from Chelsea, 2.





